REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-32 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, Claims 1-32 have been rejected. By the above amendment, Claims 1, 9, 17, 25, 31 and 32 have been amended and Claims 8, 16, 24 and 30 have been canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17-23, 25-29, 31 and 32 are currently pending.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Within the Office Action, Claims 1-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, it is stated that the Examiner is not sure what is the difference between an external application and the research system. Within the present specification it is taught that

> [t]he API within the external systems module 170 allows other applications, either external systems or web sites, to use the research system as a central infrastructure knowledge base. The API system creates an interface between the application and the research system that allows a seamless connection to be made without users of the application noticing. . . . The application can make a request to the research system for specific data from one or more nodes within the directory tree structure, the research system retrieves the requested data, the application pulls the retrieved data from the research system, the application reformats the retrieved data for the system on which the application resides, and the system utilizes the retrieved data as if the system itself retrieved and formatted the data. [Application Serial No. 09/800,566, page 33, lines 9-21]

Accordingly, it is clear that the external application is remote from the research system. For at least these reasons, the pending claims do particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is therefore respectfully requested that this rejection is withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Within the Office Action, Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17-23, 25-29 and 31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et

al. (hereinafter "Witek") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,661 to Doan et al. (hereinafter "Doan").

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Doan teaches a hierarchical query syntax for inquiring and selecting among database objects. Doan does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Doan does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Doan does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Accordingly, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search

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methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that each access of a searchable database includes availability of each search.

The independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to the electronic system. The method comprises formatting a searchable database within the research system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links · between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a search module, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a *dichotomous key search* and a parametric search, and further wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 2-7 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 2-7 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 9 is directed to research system for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to the research system. The research system comprises means for formatting the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein

the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and means for an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein the means for accessing one or more nodes utilizes a search module, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a *dichotomous key search* and a parametric search, and further wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 9 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 10-15 depend on the independent claim 9. As described above, the independent claim 9 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 10-15 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 17 is directed to research system for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to the research system. The research system comprises a research server configured to format the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system to access one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and to obtain data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the

external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein the research server accesses the one or more nodes by utilizing a search module, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a *dichotomous key search* and a parametric search, and further wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search.* As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 17 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 18-23 depend on the independent claim 17. As described above, the independent claim 17 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 18-23 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 25 is directed to network of devices for providing access to a searchable database by an application external to the research system. The network of devices comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format the searchable database into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system to access one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and to obtain data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the external application formats a query language string using the API such that the formatted query language string is used directly by the research system to access the directory tree structure and obtain data from the searchable database specified by the query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language, wherein the research server accesses the one or more nodes by utilizing a search module, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a *dichotomous key search* and a parametric search, and further wherein *each utilization of*

the search module includes availability of each search. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 25 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 26-29 depend on the independent claim 25. As described above, the independent claim 25 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 26-29 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 31 is directed to a method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to the research system. The method comprises formatting a searchable database within the research system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein the applications programming interface accesses the one or more nodes within the directory tree structure using a query language string, further wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a search module, further wherein the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a *dichotomous key search* and a parametric search, and further wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search.* As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 31 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Within the Office Action, Claims 8, 16, 24, 30 and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of Doan and further in view of U.S. Patent No.

5,604,772 to Botto et al. (hereinafter "Botto"). By the above amendment, Claims 8, 16, 24 and 30 have been canceled.

As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search.

Botto teaches a transmission system and modem utilizing coded modulation. Botto appears to be cited because of its teaching of a zone searching module which determines a searched zone by dichotomy. There is no motivation to warrant the combination of Witek, Doan and Botto. There is no hint, teaching or suggestion in either of Witek, Doan or Botto to warrant their combination.

Even if considered proper, the combination of Witek, Doan and Botto does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Neither, Witek, Doan, Botto nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module includes the availability of the keyword search, the hierarchical search, the dichotomous key search and the parametric search.
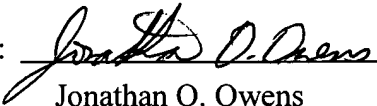
The independent claim 32 is directed to a method of accessing data within a research system by an application external to the research system. The method comprises formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and an external application different than the research system accessing one or more nodes within the directory tree structure and obtaining data from the one or more nodes by utilizing an applications programming interface (API) associated with the research system, wherein accessing one or more nodes is performed utilizing a search module, the search module includes a keyword search, a hierarchical search, a dichotomous key search, and a parametric search and further wherein *each utilization of the search module includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, the combination of Witek, Doan and Botto is not proper. Further, even if considered proper, neither Witek, Doan, Botto nor their combination teach that each utilization of the search module

includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 32 is allowable over Witek, Doan, Botto and their combination.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-32 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: *March 23, 2005*   By: _____

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